

NRO REVIEW COMPLETED



COR-0918
12 September 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief of Staff
Headquarters, U. S. Air Force

SUBJECT : Review of Cover Procedures for
CORONA Program

1. Recent favorable developments in the CORONA Program have prompted the Central Intelligence Agency to order a complete and thorough review of the cover procedures that have been and will be applied to the forthcoming and subsequent launches commencing with the firing scheduled for 13 September 1960.

2. Giving full recognition to the fact that every clandestine reconnaissance program is constantly faced with the possibility of exposure, due to either mechanical or human failure, this review has drawn specific attention to those areas where compromise is most apt to occur. These areas are as follows:

a. Malfunction of the automatic release mechanism causing re-entry to occur over denied areas exposing the reconnaissance capability to a hostile power.

b. Planned air and sea recovery teams may fail to locate the capsule and ocean retrieval may be accomplished by ships other than those under United States flag.

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c. Capsule may be damaged during normal re-entry or during the recovery effort exposing the film payload to members of the recovery team, any one of whom may inadvertently reveal such facts to unauthorized sources.

d. The handling of the payload cassette and film processing may be compromised through oral disclosures by persons knowledgeable of the procedure.

e. The loss of the booster vehicle and payload due to range safety destruct at the launch site may expose either the film or camera configuration to unauthorized sources including the press.

3. Members of the Central Intelligence Agency CORONA Staff have discussed these problem areas with cleared and responsible officers of the USAF Ballistic Missile Division, and a joint report has been prepared. A copy of that report, herewith attached, includes a listing of both primary and secondary cover explanations and also outlines various precautionary measures that have been taken or are scheduled for early implementation to reduce the risks of exposure to the least degree possible.

4. Further, as a matter considered of mutual interest, there is also attached a summary of significant accomplishments which the CORONA Program has contributed to the progress of the nation's space effort.

5. This Agency would appreciate any comments you may wish to make on the plans outlined in the attached report on cover and security.

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RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.
Deputy Director
(Plans)

Attachments:
COR-0918/a
COR-0918/b

DPD-DDP:TMA/mg (12 September 1960)
Retyed: O/DDP:RMB:rc (12 September 1960)

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